

Delaware Insurance Department Releases 2017 Health Insurance Rates for ACA Marketplace Plans

DOVER, DE – Insurance Commissioner Karen Weldin Stewart today released Delaware's Qualified Health Plan average rates for Plan Year 2017.

The Commissioner recommended approval of a 32.5 % average rate increase in the individual market for Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield of Delaware. The approved average rate increase for the small group market for Highmark's plans is 2.74%.

Aetna Life Insurance Company received an average of 22.8 % increase in the individual market and Aetna Health Insurance Company received an average increase of 23.6 %. In the small group market, Aetna Life received an average increase of 15.2 % and Aetna Health received an average increase of 19.7 %.

The Commissioner, after a thorough actuarial review of rate requests submitted by the insurers' in June, submitted her approved rates to the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) in August. CMS subsequently conducted a final review of the Aetna Health and Aetna Life requests and concurred with the Commissioner's recommendations.

The Aetna Health rate reflects a 1.4% reduction of the insurer's individual rate request made in June, and Aetna Life's rate is a 1.1% reduction of its June request. In the small group market, Aetna Health's rate reflects a 3.5% reduction of the original request, and Aetna Life's rate is 3.4% less than requested.

The Commissioner originally reduced rates requested by

Highmark BCBS and submitted them to CMS. However, CMS urged Delaware and neighboring states to reconsider their submissions and accept Highmark's original rates as filed. Several BCBS entities have left, threatened to leave, or reduced coverage in other states' marketplaces for 2017. Aetna recently announced they are leaving the ACA exchanges in eleven different states, but will remain in Delaware for 2017. Given this fluid environment, and to maintain a stable and competitive marketplace in Delaware, the Commissioner and her actuaries agreed with CMS's analysis and approved the original rates requested by Highmark.

The approved rates are average rates; some consumers may pay more, some less. Under Delaware law, the Commissioner evaluates the reasonableness of rates to ensure they are not excessive, inadequate or unfairly discriminatory.

As always, in all lines of insurance, the Department recommends consumers shop around for their insurance needs. Costs can vary substantially between insurers. For the Marketplace plans, please use only the official sites, <https://www.healthcare.gov> and <http://www.choosehealthde.com>.

The Department of Insurance held public information sessions in each county in June to receive comment on the proposed rate increases. Written comments can be found at <http://www.delawareinsurance.gov/departments/rates/ratefilings.shtml>. All 2017 rates with justifications, along with information regarding non-marketplace health plans and on- and off-marketplace dental plans, may be found on the Department's Rate Filings page: <http://www.delawareinsurance.gov/departments/rates/ratefilings.shtml>

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